III.—GUNTUR FOOD POSITION.

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I am told that a statement on the Guntur Food Position has been placed on the table of the House."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Can we ask questions on the statement now or on a subsequent date? "

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Not to-day at any rate."

IV.—NON-OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

A—BILLS.

THE MADRAS CITY TENANTS' PROTECTION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1947.

* SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Mr. President, Sir, it is with a feeling of some trepidation that I rise to move the motion standing in my name for leave to introduce the Bill. That is because the Government adopted a somewhat curious attitude when Bills were introduced by private members in this House on the last occasion. I hope that the appeal that we made on that occasion that a convention should be established that at the stage of introduction the Government should not oppose, reserving to themselves the right to take up any attitude they like afterwards, would be followed and that I will be permitted to introduce this Bill.

" My Bill seeks to amend an Act of 1921. I hope you will allow me the indulgence to give in a few words the history of this legislation. If the Preamble to the Madras City Tenants' Protection Act is read, it will be seen that this legislation was undertaken by the Government to give protection to tenants in many parts of the City of Madras who had constructed buildings on others' lands in the hope that they would not be evicted so long as they paid a fair rent for the land. Then it was my privilege to work under the guidance of the late Diwan Bahadur Varadarajulu Naidu and set up an agitation for the promulgation of this legislation. We were ably assisted by Dr. Besant who was then editing ' New India '. When the facts were brought to the notice of the then Law Member, late Sir K. Srinivasa Ayyangar, he immediately wanted to go to the succour of the unfortunate tenants who were being evicted from lands occupied by them and on which they had built superstructures in the hope that they would not be evicted so long as they paid fair rent for the land. These were the hey-days of the Justice Party. The Justice Party occupied every place of power and authority; almost all public bodies were monopolized by them. Even in the Justice Party, as in any party, there were vested interests and there was a certain amount of opposition to certain clauses of the Bill. But realizing that the main object would be frustrated if he persisted in giving the relief that was demanded by us on behalf of the tenants, Sir K. Srinivasa Ayyangar compromised on many points and yielded to the agitation of those who had a voice in shaping the legislation, and the Bill emerged from the Council in its present form. As is usual with legislation of this kind, a great deal of case law has grown and